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Letter dated 20 July 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Your Special Representative, Mr. Alvaro de Soto, during the last day of the third round of proximity talks held in Geneva on 12 July 2000, reiterated an appeal on your behalf to the two sides "to play down the tone, size and content of the official rhetoric accompanying any events that will take place" in Cyprus during the period between the last and the forthcoming round of talks.

Notwithstanding your above-mentioned appeal, we have yet again witnessed a number of provocative actions by the Turkish side during these past few days which arrogantly ignore your appeal to refrain from such actions. You will also recall the letter dated 17 July 2000 from the President of the Republic, Mr. Clerides, addressed to you, on the provocative actions of the Turkish military forces, which created an explosive situation in Strovilia.

In this regard, I would like to draw your attention to violations of the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus and the Nicosia flight information region, by a great number of military aircraft of the Turkish Air Force on 14, 16, 17, 19 and 20 July 2000, in some cases flying also over the government-controlled area of Nicosia, including the buffer zone. It is emphasized that seven (7) of these aircraft were transport/personnel carriers and we would find it difficult to believe that they came only for parade reasons. Further, on 17 and 18 July 2000, five (5) warships, two (2) of which are frigates, another two (2) submarines and one (1) mother ship, of the Turkish Navy violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and arrived at Kyrenia port.

At this point I would like to refer to the letter, dated 13 July 2000, from the Turkish Permanent Representative addressed to you (A/54/938-S/2000/688), in which certain untrue information was transmitted to you concerning alleged National Guard rearmament activities. These allegations are an obvious attempt to pre-empt any reactions from the Government of the Republic of Cyprus and, at the same time, to provide an alibi to all those actions by the Turkish occupation forces that would constitute a definite violation of your appeal to refrain from provocation, as mentioned above.

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In any event, all National Guard activities fall within the legitimate sphere of defence of the Republic of Cyprus, made necessary as a result of the 1974 Turkish military invasion and the illegal stationing of massive Turkish occupation forces, as described herein below, ever since. At this point, I would like to reiterate the proposal of the President of the Republic, Mr. Clerides, for complete demilitarization of the island and declare the readiness of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus towards this end.

As you will recall, in your report to the Security Council on the United Nations Operation in Cyprus, dated 10 December 1995 (S/1995/1020), you correctly described the occupied areas of Cyprus as "one of the most densely militarized areas in the world". In this regard, I would like to bring the following to your attention: the Turkish occupation forces in Cyprus consist of approximately thirty-six thousand (36,000) troops and officers divided into two (2) infantry divisions, one (1) armoured brigade, one (1) armoured regiment, three (3) artillery regiments, one (1) special forces regiment, along with other supportive and administrative units. Furthermore, there are three hundred and eighty-six (386) M48A5T2 main battle tanks, four hundred and sixty-six (466) M-113 and NUROL armoured personnel carriers, four hundred and thirty-seven (437) artillery guns and self-propelled mortars of various ranges, one hundred and twenty (120) MILAN-TOW antitank missiles and four hundred (400) recoilless rifle 106 mm antitank guns.

I would also like to bring to your attention that, since the beginning of this year, the Turkish occupation forces were further reinforced with forty-four (44) M48A5T1 and M48A5T2 main battle tanks, sixty-two (62) NUROL and M-113 armoured personnel carriers, some of which carry TOW antitank missiles, and a number of various wheeled armoured and special mission vehicles.

Last but not least, mention has to be made of the appearance of COBRA attack helicopters illegally stationed in the occupied areas in violation, among others, of United States of America domestic laws, according to which American arms can only be used for purposes of defence, and of bilateral United States-Turkey agreements.

While strongly protesting these actions and attitude, which flagrantly violate international law, as well as Security Council resolutions on Cyprus, and calling for their cessation, I would like, once more, to express the hope that the necessary positive attitude will be finally shown by Turkey, so that the proximity talks in progress, as well as all other efforts for finding a just and viable solution to the Cyprus problem, on the basis of United Nations resolutions, will not be adversely affected.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 63, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sotos **Zackheos**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative